

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1 - 9 (Cancelled)

10. (Currently amended) A cover for an axle seal aperture, the axle seal being coupled to a transmission housing, the cover comprising:

a guard plate having an aperture extending therethrough, said guard plate being adapted to engage the axle seal and couple said guard plate thereto;

a ~~one-piece~~ shield having a first portion and a detachable second portion, said first portion being coupled to said guard plate, said shield enclosing said guard aperture when said second portion is attached to said first portion, said first portion defining an aperture aligned with said guard aperture when said second portion is detached from said first portion, wherein said guard plate includes an aperture at least partially filled by a portion of said shield.

11. (Original) The cover of claim 10 wherein said guard plate includes an annular lip adapted to be engageable with the axle seal to couple the cover to the axle seal.

12. (Original) The cover of claim 10 wherein said shield is constructed from injection moldable material.

13. (Original) The cover of claim 12 wherein said first portion includes an outwardly extending tang selectively engageable by an operator to separate said first portion from said second portion.

14. (Previously presented) A cover for an axle seal aperture, the axle seal being coupled to a transmission housing, the cover comprising:

a guard plate having an aperture extending therethrough, said guard plate being adapted to engage the axle seal and couple said guard plate thereto;

a shield having a first portion and a detachable second portion, said first portion being coupled to said guard plate, said shield enclosing said guard aperture when said second portion is attached to said first portion, said first portion defining an aperture aligned with said guard aperture when said second portion is detached from said first portion wherein said guard plate includes a plurality of apertures having portions of said shield positioned in said apertures.

15. (Original) The cover of claim 11 wherein said guard plate includes a conically shaped section positioned adjacent said annular lip, said conically shaped section adapted to cover a portion of the axle seal.

16. (Original) The cover of claim 15 wherein said guard plate includes an annular flange positioned adjacent said conically shaped section, said guard plate aperture extending through said annular flange.

17. (Currently amended) A cover for an axle seal aperture, the axle seal being coupled to a transmission housing, the cover comprising:

a tubular guard structure having a substantially cylindrical wall portion positioned adjacent to a substantially conical wall portion, said cylindrical wall portion being adapted to engage the axle seal and couple the cover to the axle seal; and

a ~~one-piece~~ shield having a first portion and a detachable second portion, said first portion being coupled to said guard structure and at least partially extending into an

aperture formed in said guard structure, said shield enclosing one end of said guard structure when said second portion is attached to said first portion, said first portion defining an aperture in communication with a passage defined by said tubular guard structure when said second portion is detached from said first portion.

18. (Previously presented) The cover of claim 17 wherein said guard structure includes a radially inwardly extending annular flange positioned adjacent to said conical wall portion.

19. (Previously presented) The cover of claim 18 wherein said annular flange defines a guard aperture aligned with said first portion aperture.

20. (Previously presented) The cover of claim 17 wherein said shield is constructed from an injection moldable material.

21. (Previously presented) The cover of claim 20 wherein said first portion includes an outwardly extending tang selectively engageable by an operator to separate said first portion from said second portion.

22. (Previously presented) A cover for an axle seal aperture, the axle seal being coupled to a transmission housing, the cover comprising:

a tubular guard structure having a substantially cylindrical wall portion positioned adjacent to a substantially conical wall portion, said cylindrical wall portion being adapted to engage the axle seal and couple the cover to the axle seal; and

a shield having a first portion and a detachable second portion, said first portion being coupled to said guard structure, said shield enclosing one end of said guard structure when said second portion is attached to said first portion, said first portion defining an aperture in communication with a passage defined by said tubular guard

structure when said second portion is detached from said first portion wherein said guard structure includes a plurality of apertures having portions of said shield positioned in said apertures.

23. (Previously presented) The cover of claim 17 wherein said second portion includes a cylindrically shaped hollow wall.

24. (Previously presented) The cover of claim 23 wherein said cylindrically shaped hollow wall includes a longitudinal axis aligned with a longitudinal axis of said tubular guard structure.